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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a field experience program that involved preservice teachers in creating action plans that would incorporate schools of education and human service agencies in collaborative efforts for the welfare of children. The program, a component of the Secondary Education Teacher Development Seminar, required development of an Individualized Field Experience Plan (IFEP) which involved students' self-assessment of their background, an outline of their specific goals, and 15 hours of school and community observations. The community involvement component of the IFEP brought students to an increased awareness of diverse living conditions and educational backgrounds. The personal stories are presented of two graduate students with theater backgrounds who began a program that benefitted hundreds of inner city youth. Factors in the field experience program's success are analyzed, such as having a support group of peers in the seminar, using a team teaching approach, and assigning students to reflect on persons who made a difference in their lives. Appendices provide the form used for an Individualized Field Experience Plan and a sample copy of a completed IFEP. (JDD)

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IFEP AS A TOOL FOR INFUSING COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER PREPARATION

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IFEP as a Tool for Infusing Community Service Agencies in Preservice Teacher Preparation

Wanna be teachers are well aware of the "savage inequalities " that exist in today's schools. Preservice programs remind students of Kidder's (1989) assessment that "Mrs. Zajac's classroom is big enough to house much of human nature." A reviewer summarizing Kidder's *Among School Children* wrote:

> Her [Zajac's] little room contains a distillate of some of the worst social problems of our time. Some of the children's young lives seem already stunted by physical and emotional deprivation. And some are full of precarious promise."

The description is vivid, and it is very real to preservice teachers who in their field experiences find themselves in lower income neighborhoods confronting issues that they have not seen in their comfortable middle class neighborhoods. The challenge of better preparing preservice teachers for today's classroom is ongoing. The Association of Teacher Educators is asking its members at the 74th annual meeting to respond to a survey to help determine what is being done in teacher education programs to help teachers deal with parents and the community. In any case, researchers and policymakers (e.g. Carnegie, 1986; Goodlad, 1990, Holmes, 1986) calling for the reform of teacher education have urged that we rethink the experiences we offer pre-service teachers.

The purpose of this paper is to describe how one teacher education program initiated a field experience program that involved preservice teachers in action plans for networking and developing collaborative enterprises to incorporate schools of education and human service agencies for the welfare of children. This is the personal story of how two graduate students assigned to the field in a course requirement began a program that benefitted hundreds of inner city youth. The initial focus of the project was on the changing needs of today's public schools students, but it culminated in a real-life commitment of graduate students working in the community to design strategies to meet the needs of today's diverse learners.

Background

A team taught secondary education seminar in teacher development was being piloted as a graduate licensure class in a large urban university in the desert southwest. The preservice teachers would have an opportunity for an initial field placement in the fourteenth largest school district in the United States; however, no program existed for the preservice teachers to become involved with community agencies. Furthermore, the professors agreed that their independent philosophies were grounded in constructivism -- a belief that active student involvement is of paramount significance.

The texts selected for the seminar were Mike Rose (1989) *Lives on the Boundary* and Philip Schlechty (1990) *Schools for the 21st Century.* Students were asked to focus on their aspirations to be a

teacher and issues in the contemporary classroom that would affect their role as a professional educator. In addition, each student was asked to complete an Individual Field Experience Plan. (Appendix A.)

The Program, Participants and Context

Twenty-eight pre-service teacher educators were enrolled in the Secondary Education Teacher Development Seminar team taught by two university faculty. The life experiences of the students in the teacher development seminar informed their attitudes, values and beliefs about the needs of the diverse learners in the public school classroom. For example, when reading of Mike Rose's growing up in the shadows of the Watts towers, Mary* responded in small group discussion that it was hard for her to "relive these experiences because she, too, had grown up in Watts." At the same time, another preservice candidate, Al, said he thought it was ludicrous to "feel sorry for those in these conditions; after all, they should pull themselves up by the bootstraps; that's what he had done." Yet another position was offered by the student in the class who "could not believe people lived in these conditions."

The seminar had four major components: (1) constructing a portfolio; (2) reading Rose and Schlechty; (3) developing and completing an Individualized Field Experience Plan; (4) leading a seminar project/presentation. During the weekly seminars, co-led by two university faculty, the prospective teachers were involved in a

*The names of the students used in this paper are pseudonyms

number of activities. These have included: responding to pertinent readings (e.g., The initial assignment for the class was: Read the 24th Gallup Poll. Prioritize, based on the list on p. 43 according to your own perspectives, the 10 "Biggest Problems Facing Local Public School in 1992." In reviewing the complete poll, identify the three areas of greatest interest to you; the three of least interest. You will be asked to explain your selections.); planning a cooperative presentation on an issue of importance for today's classroom; viewing Jane Elliot's videotape "A Class Divided," followed up with attendance at a university forum presented by Jane Elliot; and listening to and interacting with guest speakers, e.g., members of the class who were teaching in the Clark County School District.

In their field experience, the prospective teachers were required to have 15 hours in the field that would be divided between school and community observations. The professors would guide the students concerning possibilities, but the students actual field experience would be self-initiated. This was in direct contrast to a General Methods Class taught to the traditional undergraduate students at the same university in which each student was "assigned" to a middle or secondary school for observations.

Throughout the field experiences and the seminars, a pluralist perspective was emphasized, one that honors the power and possibilities of all people's backgrounds. Like Gomez and Tabachnick (1991) all of the experiences of the seminar were geared toward preparing what Joseph Cambone (1990) has recently called teachers

of "salience", teachers whose work interests and excites children while it build the critical skills they require to enter the culture of power in the United States (Delpit, 1988).

The membership of the pilot seminar was diverse. Three African-American females, three Hispanic/Latino females and one Hispanic/Latino male, one international student from the Phillipines, three White males and the remainder were White females. Unique to this graduate seminar were the participants who were to be part of a cohort group. Ranging in age from 24 - 45+, the students had not known one another until they all met in the graduate class bringing with them their own diverse educational backgrounds from professional theater, inner city dance company, a stock broker, and a veterinarian -- all deciding to become teachers.

The IFEP Experience

The Individual Field Experience Plan (IFEP) required that each student complete a self-assessment of their background in an area they identified as part of their professional goal. Each student presented a self-report assessment and a desired level of competence through the field experience. In addition, the students outlined specific goals to be achieved. A completed copy of one such assessment is included as Appendix B. The students were asked to assess the amount of time they would spend in a classroom environment and the amount of time with community activities. The instructors reviewed the student's plans and accepted or rejected the proposal with suggestions for implementation.

The experiences in the schools were pretty typical of what we have come to expect from prestudent teaching placements. The students were in a classroom with a teacher for a limited number of hours observing. At times the students assisted the teacher with correcting papers, constructing bulletin boards, tutoring one-on-one or helping the teacher as requested. However, the IFEP with the community involvement brought the students to an awareness we had not anticipated.

The Story of Betsy

Betsy and Gwen were members of the Teacher Development Seminar enrolled in the program from January, 1993 through May. Their stories are, in part, stories of the changes that take place in teachers; they illustrate the importance of field experiences within the community as a place to rethink one's role in education outside the classroom. We begin with Betsy, a working middle class White student from Nevada who returned to school after a career as a professional actress with parts on and off Broadway. As a member of the licensure program, Betsy had a B.A. degree and was working on her teaching credentials.

When she returned to Nevada, Betsy had opened her own studio and was involved in enrichment programs at the public schools. She enrolled in the Teacher Development Seminar with the desire to "be the head of a musical theater and theater program at a major high school in Clark County."

Betsy's summary of her observation and community involvement suggested that she was "shocked", "surprised", and "excited" about the real world of the young people she planned to teach. Her observations follow:

> I decided not only to observe and research different community venues, but to implement a program based on my socio-economic research for an important community organization. I investigated the S.I>M>B>A Performing Arts group, which provides performing arts classes, and I also researched A.F.A.N. (AIDS for AIDS of NEVADA), and learned about their Teen Theater Program through one of the Directors of the Program at A.F.A.N. The New Vision Teen theater, directed by the theater Arts Instructor at Las Vegas High School, is a very important group of teen actors who through scenes and original work travel around the district with their highly contemporary and current issues performances.
>
> After speaking with the director, I realized that not everyone is willing to accept their kids being educated in the schools about sexual relationships and sexual diseases. It is important work that is being done by this group and it will take time for it to become palatable for everyone. I was very surprised to learn the statistics on AIDS among young people. Informed of the numbers, I must admit I was shocked! I think it would be dynamic to start implementing programs in the schools, where all Drama Departments would have some sort of program/performance that could recreate current teen issues and world crisis issues.

If Betsy's experiences in the schools surprised her, the professors were equally surprised at the outcome of Betsy's IFEP in the community. This summary emphasizes what Lortie's (1975) research had suggested about the intrinsic reasons that teachers give for entering the profession, "the desire to make a difference." These

words are re-echoed in Betsy's summary of her community experience. She writes:

> My visit to the Boys and Girls Club on March 16 turned out to be a great experience and opened a door for me to bring my Musical theater Workshop to the facility. After meeting the Director of the facility, I was not only able to observe and learn about the program, but offered to bring my two hour workshop to the Club on a Saturday and conduct my Musical theater class. We put together a program for May 1, 1993. I will conduct my workshop from 10-noon on that day and my kids from the Parks and Recreation class will attend to assist and be group leaders. I wanted to be able to lend my talents to a worthy organization and I felt that the Boys and Girls fit the bill.
>
> This organization, which is a national program, facilitates kids for different ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic conditions. They are charged only five dollars per year to be a member, if the child cannot pay, they pay for them. My socio-economic awareness plan was to find a training or performance class for a young aspiring performer/talent, for little or no funds. This is not an easy task, in that most qualified and quality programs do cost money. There are some very good programs through Las Vegas, Clark County and Parks and Recreation that provide solid training in dance movement, theater and music. I implemented the Musical Theater Program to educate students about the art form of Broadway Musical Theater/Performance. I wanted to offer my time and talents to an organization so as to make a difference, not just for those students who can afford private and class instruction, but for those of lesser means who deserve the same chance to develop their talents!

Of course, Betsy's project took more than the required 15 hours and the implementation of a program in the Boys and Girls Club led to a serendipitous project that none of us could have imagined.

The story of Gwen

Like Besty, Gwen was a student in the Teacher Development Seminar for the purpose of gaining her teaching credentials. Gwen, an African American female describes her background as a person with "hundreds of hours in college classrooms," with a B.A. from Websters College and an M.F.A. from the University of California - San Diego. Gwen's background included vivid memories of the burning of the cities in the '60s. She became a member of the Performing Arts Training Center (P.A.T.C.) in East St. Louis and credits her work with Ms. Dunham as a way of working her way through college.

Gwen's background also included volunteering with the National Youth Sports Program (NYSP) that makes available to many American young people important experiences in sports and enrichment activities.

In a seminar mid-way through the semester after watching the video on Jane Elliot's "A Class Divided" and attending the on-campus lecture by Ms. Elliot, Gwen silenced her classmates with the quiet statement, "We face this [discrimination] every day!" The intense emotion and conflicting comments that followed this statement provided further discussion about the on-going belief that African-

American children often face unique challenges daily just because of the color of their skin.

The voice of Gwen in the seminar helped the preservice teachers come to understand their need to demonstrate their own "trustworthiness", rather than insist that it is "those students who must prove themselves." Gwen's story of her IFEP is as follows:

> "I was assigned to a teacher who was in her second year in the school district. She had transferred from Hawaii and explained that her students were 'at risk' but also 'extremely talented.' As the students passed through the door, I could see the transformation from student to the proud players of the world. Last night was the closing of *Grease,* the musical, and everyone carried high energy.
>
> The best part of this opportunity for me was to talk and listen to Mrs. ____. She's not only an educator but also a talented performer. She is a small Jewish lady, married to a talented musician who happens to be Filipino and an elementary teacher in the system. He was responsible for all of the music in *Grease.* From these two I began to see how I could use my theater background in the classroom with at risk students.

As a result of this initial experience in the high school and because of in class meetings with the other student from musical theater, the two preservice teachers developed a program for the Boys and Girls Club that would result in students having a two hour workshop. Furthermore, because of the connections with the National Youth Sports Program, the two preservice teachers

developed a Saturday program that became part of the NYSP curriculum for 8-12 year olds on Saturday mornings.

In addition, because of Gwen's modelling and discussion of the NYSP program, several students in the Teacher Development Seminar began "volunteering" in the Saturday morning program. As a result the middle school and elementary age children had special opportunities in sports, art, dance, theater, gymnastics and even one session on "the games played by children in the Philippines."

Analyses and Discussion

In looking back over the stories of Betsy and Gwen in analyzing the ways they thought and talked about their teaching and the changes in their teaching behavior, it seems to us that several factors present in their teacher education program help to explain their development. One factor is their involvement in a pilot program of graduate licensure students. This group of peers is one of potential critic commentators, but they also became a support group for one another as they struggled with problems unique to their backgrounds. The influence of the team teaching was also an interesting phenomena. One student suggested, "It [team teaching] worked well since you were opposites; it kept the class moving and gave us two perspectives to view from." (Interview, 5/93) His comments clearly echo the importance of knowing a group of students well, being able to have differing points of view in the classroom or having students help you make sense out of something

that happened in the classroom is one of the important resources of the graduate licensure program.

A second factor is the content and form of most of the seminar discussions. One of the important assignments was their Educational Autobiography in which the students shared their journey into teaching. The students are asked to reflect on the persons who made a difference in their lives. Through this assignment students begin to connect their talking, reading and thinking about their purposes, plans, and justifications for teaching. One African-American student who had been educated all over the world could not recall her experiences in school without reliving the pain she had felt. Unlike a traditional methods class, these students often reflected that reading Rose, "brought a lot of memories," "his book hit me emotionally," or "reading Rose has given me a better perspective of some of the later trends in education and future endeavors." (Interview, 5/93)

A third factor was the reaction to the Individual Field Experience Plan. Students comments are recorded below to give a range of the responses:

*The IFEP experience has been very beneficial to me because it gave me a better perspective of the at-risk student.

*This was an incredible experience, I highly recommend that this program continue.

*The IFEP helped me to grow as a teacher.

*Wonderful. I wish it were more than five point. I particularly enjoyed creating my own area of focus.

*Extremely rewarding and eye-opening. I learned a great deal from this activity.

*Interesting experience. I really enjoyed my observations, etc.

*Excellent, yet difficult, as self-examinations usually are.

*Loved it. Want to do more. Want to interact. Valuable to teacher and student for reactions.

*Invaluable. Real life exposure is illuminating.

*Absolutely wonderful. A true insight into the kids and school environment.

*After you got into it, the goals did not become all that important. A very good experience.

Perhaps the most telling summary of an IFEP comes from a student's report. She wrote:

> After hours of searching through the phone book, knocking on doors and politely being turned away, I was at a loss as to what I might do with this portion of my IFEP. Being assigned to a middle school as opposed to a senior high changed my plans as I began to contemplate what would be involved in teaching as this level. As a result of this, I decided that I still wanted to learn about at risk students but, I decided to change my focus. Instead of listening to what the experts had to say, I went directly to the source -- a sixteen year old male

who had been kicked out of high school because he pulled out a 2" knife in self-defense.

In one part of this interview, the sixteen year old confided, "School's a scary place. You have to be able to fight, to stick up for yourself. If not . . . that's why people bring guns to school. They're forced to be that way. It's like everybody is a gunslinger, always having to prove who's the best." This statement was not a description of school that the middle class white female had heard before. Her IFEP reflection stated, "The most valuable thing I learned from this experience? I will never judge my students based on their appearances and I will always assume the best until there is substantial evidence to the contrary."

The preservice teacher concluded, "And finally, I will always have the highest possible expectations of my students. I believe that they will rise to meet them." It was this story that we heard over and over as we read through the IFEPs. The prospective teachers began to have altered visions of diverse children and began to see ways in which they the teachers could change classroom life into a meaningful experience. Furthermore, the students who met together for the semester began to see the possibilities for change in their communities.

Betsy and Gwen are student teaching this semester, but they continue with plans for enhancing and enriching children's lives in the communities where they teach. The IFEP led to a linkage of two students with theater backgrounds who are now working with summer programs in their communities providing sponsorships and

opportunities for students who earlier could not pay the five dollar fee for a membership in the Boys and Girls Club. We believe that this is powerful testimony to the need to have preservice teachers seeing and working in the environments of the whole child not just the school setting.

The results of 28 preservice teachers involvement in working with over 15 agencies is in its infancy. The IFEP did have an effect on future teachers, and it is one way that educators may begin collaborative efforts in the field with human service personnel, community leaders, corporations, university professors and beginning teacher educators as partners.

APPENDIX A

INDIVIDUAL FIELD EXPERIENCE PLAN

DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL AND CURRICULAR STUDIES
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION - UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

INDIVIDUAL FIELD EXPERIENCE PLAN

Name of Student _____ Semester _____ Hours _____

Professional Goal _____

_____

_____

Specific Goals to be achieved: _____

_____

_____

Self-report response:
1 - No familiarity
2 - Familiarity
3 - Understanding
4 - Application

	Field Experience Activity	Self-report Response	Desired Level
1.			
2			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			

CIG 721 - Teacher Development Seminar
Field Experience Contract

Name_____
Period of time covered by contract: From _____ **to** _____

Contract Expectations: (Total hours = 15 hours)

Students will spend a minimum of ____hours in self-selected activities that affect secondary classrooms.

Students will spend ____hours in community related experiences that will affect the lives of students in the secondary classrooms.

Students may choose to maintain a journal of their experiences based on their observations of, and participation in, classroom activities.

Students (in consultation with the CIG 721 instructor) may propose a self-guided program that will help them gain insight into the secondary classroom today. For example, students may wish to attend a school board meeting, a school faculty meeting, an extra-curricular activity, etc.

Students will keep a detailed record of the scheduling process for their particular project or activity. For example, if you decide to meet with someone in charge of school security. Who do you contact? What arrangement did you make? What are the guidelines for this project? Could several members of the class choose to do this activity at one time to save the professional's time?

Students will participate in a socio-economic awareness activity as part of the total field experience requirement.

FORMAT:

The student will report on the Field Experience by submitting a Task Notebook or Project Paper that outlines summary and description of what was done and a section that allows the student to reflect and comment on the activity as it relates to the IFEP. This report will be typewritten. .

OBSERVATION/ACTIVITY AND LOG:

Each field experience will be a very individual undertaking; therefore, the student is asked to submit an observation log at the beginning of the report. Please use the format included in this assignment.

Examples of Field Experience Activities	SR Response
I. Instruction	
A. Focused classroom observations	
1. Focus on the teacher	_____
2. Focus on the learners	_____
3. Focus on the classroom ecology	_____
B. Verbal flow in the classroom	_____
1. Use interaction analysis	_____
2. Determine if bias exists	_____
C. Lesson Preparation	
1. Assist staff in preparing for instruction	
2. Assist staff in developing new instructional strategies	
3. Assist staff in presenting lesson	
4. Determine lesson plan format utilized by master teacher	
D. Classroom Management and Discipline	
1. Determine room arrangement	
2. Examine rules and procedures for student conduct	
3. Assess ways of managing student work	
4. Determine consequences for behavior	
E. Assessment	

1. Examine methods of grading

2. Determine influences on grading practices

3. Explore alternative assessment models

4. Determine influence of standardized evaluation

F. Teaching Styles

1. Observe the teaching style of the teacher.

2. Determine what parts of the teaching style observed you would incorporate in your style.

II. Curriculum

A. Leadership

1. Develop awareness of district guides in curriculum development

2. Observe strategies for change

3. Examine integrating strategies

5. Examine the influence of contemporary issues, e.g. global education, AIDS, gender bias, etc.

6. Other _____

B. Textbook Selection

1. Examine process

2. Other _____

III. Communication

A. Informing

1. Examine bulletins, newsletters, policy statements, materials for board meetings, parent meeting or student meetings.

2. Present program to school or community group

3. Other _____

B. Encouraging and initiating

1. Student, staff, parent recognition activities

2. Activities & communications that foster high morale.

3. Other _____

C. Exploring and recognizing

1. Patterns of informal and formal organization and communication

2. Ways to improve communication

3. Other _____

IV. Management of School Climate

A. Knowledge of School Climate

1. Demographic & social characteristics

2. Knowledge of community

3. Shared values

4. Traditions, ritual, ceremonies

5. Key players in school culture

6. The common socialization practices

V. Physical Resources -- The physical plant and equipment

A. Material resources: Know the process of allocation for:

1. Textbooks

2. Supplies

3. Materials

4. Other _____

VI. Program Resources

A. Become knowledgeable about program

offerings, guidelines, and written curriculum.

B. Learn the processes and timings of scheduling programs.

C. Observe the support system for a teacher in a school setting

D. Describe the overall organizational structure of a school.

E. Become aware of the educational usage of computers.

F. Determine the use of appropriate hardware and software and its appropriate and effective use in a subject area.

G. Talk to a support staff person [custodian, bus driver, cook, teacher's aide, secretarial staff, graphic art staff, etc.]

VII. Policy Awareness

A. Governance/Policy Making: Become knowledgeable of state legislative policies, district policies, and school level policies by:

1. Reading policy/procedure manuals.

2. Attending legislative sessions and school board meetings.

3. Attending teacher, parent and community meetings.

4. Attending professional meetings

5. Attending seminars or workshops hosting guest speakers.

6. Other _____

VIII. Law

1. Understanding when and where to seek legal assistance

2. Developing techniques for keeping current with legal issues.

3. Other _____

IX. Community

1. Develop coalition-building skills

2. Know the resources that may impact teenager's lives. For example, "Together Making a Difference" was a theme for Those Who Work With Children and Teens, Jan. 30, 1993. This is a list of names from the Resource Room Exhibitors:

AAUW Teen Pregnancy
Adult Basic Skills Center
AFAN
American Red Cross
Big Brothers/Big Sisters
Boys and Girls Club, Henderson
Charter Hospital
Child Protective Services
Children's Cabinet
Clark County Housing Authority
Clark County School Psychologists, Siegle Diagnostic Center
Community Action Against Rape (CAAR)
Community Counseling
Environmental Protection Agency
Frontier Girl Scout Council
HELP of Southern Nevada
Las Vegas YMCA
March of Dimes
NV Association for the Handicapped
Nevada Highway Patrol
Planned Parenthood of So. Nevada (PPSN)
Positive Link
Shade Tree Shelter
Southern NV Cooperative Extension
Suicide Prevention Center
Temporary Assistance for Domestic Crisis (TADC)
WE CAN Inc.
Westbook Counseling
WestCare

The above list is only a representative list and additional agencies may be added or deleted according to student's individual plan.

3. Other _____

X. Socio-Economic Awareness

1. Develop an understanding of the influence of SES on today's students.

2. Implement an awareness plan. For example, take the role of one parent and two

pre-school children with a food budget of $21.00 pr week. Plan menus for three meals per day, develop a shopping list, go to store to obtain actual prices. Optional: Actually live on the budget for one week.

3. Other _____

PROJECT DESCRIPTION;

Design a self-guided project that will help you meet your professional goal. Give a rationale for the project and list contact persons, proposed readings, etc. to give you an IFEP that will be meaningful to you.

APPROVAL OF PROJECT:

_____date _____
Student's Signature

_____date _____
Site Teacher's Signature

_____date _____
Community Contact Signature

_____date _____
UNLV Field Experience Coordinator

(Amended contracts require re-submission for signatures)

[Note: These competencies were adapted from an internship program developed by Teresa Lyons, Educational Administration, University of Nevada, Las Vegas]

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE OF COMPLETED

INDIVIDUAL FIELD EXPERIENCE PLAN

OBSERVATION/ACTIVITY LOG

This observation/activity log is to be completed during your classroom observations or activities. It is to be inserted into your final report of your lab experiences.

DATE	OBSERVATION/ACTIVITY	HOURS
March 30	Observed 7hrs English class at 7th grade Jr. High	8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
April 26	Spoke with Jane Facilitator for At Risk	7:30 – 10:30 a.m.
April 27	Made copies & notes from personal files	10:30 – 12:30 a.m.
April 29	Returned books she answered questions I had created over the two day interim	7:30 – 9:30 a.m.
"	Spoke to Kathleen E.D. counselor at	9:30 – 10:45 a.m.
"	Victoria, Special Ed. facilitator, gave me a tour of the Campus, introduced me to the deans, faculty personnel, and the preschool personnel	10:45 – 12:00
"	Spoke with Jack, counselor, and the deans over lunch	12:00 – 1:30 pm
April 30	worked in the day care facilitator's	8:30 – 9:30 a.m.
May 8	Worked with Conservation Corps Mex. Corps – workshop aiding students in filling out job applications & forms & interviews & skills. Students completed an entire week of record keeping. Saturday was the culminating day.	10:00 – 12:00

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1. Definition of the "at risk" student.

IFEP outline:

IV. Management and school climate

A. Knowledge of School Climate.

1. Demographic and social characteristics.

2. Knowledge of community

2. "At risk" policies, curriculum, and support services.

IFEP outline:

VI. Program Resources

A. Become knowledgeable about program offerings, guidelines, and written curriculum.

B. Learn the processes and timings of scheduling programs.

C. Observe the support system for an "at risk" student in a school setting.

E. Talk to support staff.

VII. Policy Awareness

A. Governance/Policy Making: Become knowledgeable of state legislative policies, district policies, and school level policies by:

1. Reading policy/procedure manual.

IX. Community

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3. School management and discipline of "at risk" students.

Professional Goal: To become familiar with many of the programs for "at risk" students; including all curricular and administrative procedures.

Specific goals to be achieved: Develop a working definition for "at risk" students. Become acquainted with support services.

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Definition of the "at risk" student

IFEP outline:

IV. Management and school climate

A. Knowledge of School Climate.

1. Demographic and social characteristics.

2. Knowledge of community

The federal government defines "at risk" students with a set of guidelines that is extensive and vague. Such definitions include persons who are members of one parent families; students who have absences; students who experienced a death in the family, or children who live with a parent who does not have a high school diploma. 80% of those students attending high school fulfill one of the federal guidelines. These numbers are staggering. The majority of "at risk" students are kinesthetic learners, and it is documented that 65% of kinesthetic learners are drug users.

Kathleen points out that high school's student body is approximately 1/3 African American, 1/3 Hispanic, and 1/3 Anglo and others. Forty-two persons that belong to the "and others" category are Piaute Native Americans. is the counselor for the English as a Second Language Students. Her capacity as such makes her the only one for the Clark County school district. Accordingly, teaches the largest number of ESL students in the district. The 429 persons who represent

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this category are those that are documented. A staggering 60% of ESL students are not documented because either the parents or the students have no government documentation. reports that foreign transcripts are extremely difficult to obtain. Among the most harsh are Cuba, which will not release any records; the Philippines, which matriculates its students after the tenth grade; and Mexico, which will only release files to an actual person.

also notes that currently the Hispanic population is the highest of the "at risk" students. Many of the families do not value education, especially for the females. The career goal for many of these young ladies is to get married and have children. Other ethnic groups may value education, but these cultures also support the male members of the family more often than they support the females to complete formal schooling.

Although these statistics portray the families as being responsible for the "at risk" label, quickly points out that schools are not easily accessible to parent participation. Typically, the working hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., therefore parents that work cannot take time off to visit the school. Also record number of children are working to help support the family. These students often work up to forty hours a week. The Child Labor Laws are loosely enforced in Nevada, if at all laments

Because of these realities, many of the students that attend have never been outside the parameters of their neighborhood. These children reflect what mainstream society

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calls "low socio-economic status". They seem marked from the start. Their families lifestyle, values, and morals conflict with those of mainstream culture. They are disadvantaged financially, unable to compete with an economy that continues to exclude more and more people. And because of these factors, are disadvantaged educationally. For these students, they have little hope of finishing public school, let alone an academic career beyond the twelfth grade.

At risk" policies, curriculum, and support services

IFEP outline:

VI. Program Resources

A. Become knowledgeable about program offerings, guidelines, and written curriculum.

B. Learn the processes and timings of scheduling programs.

C. Observe the support system for an "at risk" student in a school setting.

E. Talk to support staff.

VII. Policy Awareness

A. Governance/Policy Making: Become knowledgeable of state legislative policies, district policies, and school level policies by:

1. Reading policy/procedure manual.

IX. Community

School management and discipline of "at risk" students.

There are no specific curriculum delineations for students who are considered "at risk". They read the same texts, are responsible for the same material, and are graded the same as other students. The only group that does not follow these same guidelines are special education students who are "at risk". These students have their own curriculum goals and assignments.

head of the At Risk Task Force for Clari

County, provided me with a great outline of available programs at various institutions in the Las Vegas area. Las Vegas High, for example, implemented a pilot program in which students identified as "at risk" reported to the same teachers for four class periods. Physical Education and an elective are taken with another instructor.

Eldorado High utilizes a Jet Stream program for twenty one students. This program is part of the Freedom program which is the last chance before Elko or Caliente. School volunteers work in the classes and all meals are eaten at the school in a very controlled environment. The students must sign agreements and uphold them or be removed from participation.

Cimmaron Memorial uses the buddy system, Chaparral has the mentoring system. Valley High currently uses a Block Program in which ninth graders see the same teachers and students all day. This approach is disliked by both the teachers and students.

There are several programs for "at risk" students in the system, but most are on a small scale. points out that there are no statistics available to indicate the rate of success for any of these programs. She cites this as one of the problems in creating a program to fit need for the next school year.

The pilot program currently being designed will take students who enter at the ninth grade level, and fulfill specific criteria on grades and attendance. The group will be small and selected by members of the task force committee. Their progress will be closely monitored for statistical reasons. This

program has been in the design stages for a year. Phoenix has had a program similar to this one for the past five years.

and her task force of five have visited various school districts in the western part of the United States, and attended numerous conferences. The Sixth Annual Conference for At-Risk Students was held in Phoenix, Arizona this year during the week of March 4-7. A June 14-18 conference in Reno will feature Roger Taylor and concentrate on integrating curriculum across the curriculum.

Community involvement for the "at risk" population is surprisingly comparable. The positive choice classroom' program brings together students from the west and east sides of Las Vegas and allows them to discuss problems they are experiencing in their lives. The participants see that the same anxieties are experienced by all, regardless of where one lives.

Montevista Hospital offers a program entitled "Positive Choices" for first time offenders between the ages of nine and sixteen. Juvenile Court Services conducts workshops entitled "Back in Control". Operation Bell, sponsored by the Junior League, is program in which students can obtain new socks, underwear, and school supplies free of charge. The John C. Freemont Boutique provides used clothing to children free of charge. They come to the store and select the items that they want.

The Stupak Center is a new organization in which the police, city of las Vegas, zoning and construction crews, and various

other volunteers collaborate to create a better atmosphere for those living in the zip code area. This community wide effort has cleaned up vacant lots, registered voters door to door, closed several crack houses, and conducted an inquiry on child care. Horizon school has even opened a satellite program in the area!

On campus, some secondary schools have on site daycare for the children of students. At the parent(s) must work in the daycare for one class period of the day, and they must take their lunch period with their infant. The day that I visited there, I observed two infants, three young toddlers, and two older toddlers. Parent(s) are responsible for signing children in, documenting the feeding and changing schedule, and must provide clothes, diapers, formula and bottles, and food. The parent may purchase any of these items from the school. During the senior year, all parent(s) utilizing the daycare facilities are required to take a parenting class as part of their graduation requirements.

Also on the campus is a Career Development Corps. This center provides job listings, resume services, and counseling for students actively looking for a job. The first week in May, the Corps provided a week long workshop providing students with interview skills, exercises in filling out applications, and guidelines for on-the-job-performance. Many of these students have had no experience with employers and this workshop aided in alleviating any anxiety or fear.

Ultimately, the deans have the authority to enforce discipline on students. Punishment must be fair, firm, and consistent. The deans are provided with a list of minimum and maximum choices, and the violation that accompanies the punishment. Firearms or drugs on school property result in an immediate expulsion. Using foul language to a teacher is considered gross insubordination. Attacking a teacher results in immediate expulsion.

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